CHAPTER I.

EXTENSION AND CONSTITUTION OF STATE FORESTS.

(i).—ALTERATION OF AREA.

16. The changes which the forest areas of the Central Circle, settled and constituted under the Forest Act, have undergone, are exhibited in the following statement:—

Divisions.	Area on 1st July 1896.				Added during the year.				Excluded during the year.				Area on 30th June 1897.			
	Reserved.		Protected.		Reserved.		Protected.		Reserved.		Protected.		Reserved.		Protected.	
	Square miles.	Acres.	Square miles.	Acres.	Square miles.	Acres.	Square miles.	Acres.	Square miles.	Acres.	Square miles.	Acres.	Square miles.	Acres.	Square miles.	Acres.
East Khándesh	811	21	...	...	...	53	...	...	...	15	...	...	811	59	...	...
West Khándesh	1,724	433	...	...	4	330	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,739	123	...	...
Násik..	1,279	241	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,279	241	...	...
Ahmednagar	836	579	11	100	...	76	...	...	...	25	...	...	836	630	11	100
Poona...	710	530	...	...	...	33	...	...	...	14	...	...	710	549	...	...
Sátára...	687	304	...	616	9	414	...	...	...	...	...	14	697	78	...	602
Sholápur	277	411	...	...	...	97	...	...	...	52	...	...	277	456	...	...
Total ..	6,337	599	12	76	14	363	...	...	...	106	...	14	6,352	216	12	62

Thus it will be seen that the reserved and protected forest area at close of the year amounted to 6,364 square miles and 278 acres; the net increase in favour of the year being 14 square miles and 243 acres in the total forest area of the Circle.

17. Of the 14 square miles and 363 acres shown as added to reserved forests, 4 square miles and 369 acres denote book rectification of areas owing to errors discovered in original entries and to discrepancies in measurements and calculations between the old and recent surveys, and 9 square miles and 634 acres are additional areas which have been settled and declared reserved forests by notifications under Section 19 of the Indian Forest Act, during the year. Disforestations, both of reserved and protected forests, have been very trifling. Of the 106 acres excluded from reserved forests 39 acres represent rectifications of mistakes in book entries and only 14 acres of protected forests have been disforested to become building sites at Mahábaleshvar.

(ii).—FOREST SETTLEMENTS.

18. All important settlement work has already been completed long ago, and there remains only the afforestation of certain occupied lands contained within the sanctioned forest boundary lines, which as they become vacant and available are settled under the provisions of the Forest Act; this duty, together with the compilation of the records of the forest settlement, is engaging the time and attention of the Forest Settlement Officers.

19. Information as regards outstanding settlement work is given in the following statement as required by Government in paragraph 3 of their Resolution No. 5068, dated 29th June 1896, in the Revenue Department:—

No.	Division.	Stages of Outstanding Work.						
		Occupied lands to be acquired.			Land to be notified under Section 4.	Land to be notified under Section 7.	Land to be notified under Section 19.	Total.
		By exchange or Compensation.		Land to be notified under the Land Acquisition Act.				
		Negotiations Proceeding.	Negotiations completed.					
		A. g.	A. g.	A. g.	A. g.	A. g.	A. g.	A. g.
1	East Khándesh ...	3,193 5	2,964 3	833 21	217 22	2,746 21	...	6,990 29
2	West Khándesh ...	3,314 37	1,730 30	1,252 33	77 0	1,653 30	...	6,298 20
3	Násik	...	...	...	...	...	22 0	22 0
4	Ahmednagar... ..	376 16	76 38	...	76 1	166 38	166 38	860 11
5	Poona	677 39	162 6	12 8	199 34	51 30	51 30	941 31
6	Sátára	327 35	...	...	...	79 8	168 36	575 39
7	Sholápur	...	...	...	...	...	127 0	127 0
	Total ...	7,890 12	4,933 37	2,0.8 22	570 17	4,698 7	536 24	15,816 10

20. Settlement work in the Khándesh, Pooña and Sátára districts is entrusted to one of the Assistant Collectors, and in the Ahmednagar district to the Huzúr Deputy Collector. These officers are provided with special office establishments, while in the Násik and Sholápur districts the Assistant and Deputy Collectors in charge of Revenue Sub-divisions are ex-officio Forest Settlement Officers for their respective revenue jurisdictions.

21. The following statement will show the occupied lands acquired for forests during the year and the mode of their acquisition :—

No.	Division.	Area.		Compensation paid.	Remarks.
		By exchange.	By payment.		
		A. g.	A. g.	Rs. a. p.	
1	East Khándesh ...	...	131 36	385 11 8	
2	West Khándesh ...	123 36	3 10	7 4 8	
3	Násik	...	...	.....	
4	Ahmednagar	76 1	0 37	5 0 0	
5	Poona	11 12	2 22	90 0 0	
6	Sátára...	108 28	80 14	355 0 0	
7	Sholápur	30 26	29 0	252 0 0	Not charged in forest accounts.
	Total ...	350 23	247 39	1,095 0 4	

22. 9 square miles and 634 acres have been settled and constituted reserved forests by notifications issued under Section 19 of the Indian Forest Act and the work is distributed thus :—

No.	Division.	Area.	
		Sq. m.	Acres.
1	East Khándesh	...	18
2	West do.	...	...
3	Násik	...	...
4	Ahmednagar	...	72
5	Poona	...	33
6	Sátára	9	414
7	Sholápur	...	97
	Total ...	9	634

23. Of the lands notified under Section 4 during 1895-96, as well as during the year of the report, the following were still undergoing settlement when the year closed :—

No.	Division.	Area.	
		Sq. m.	Acres.
1	East Khándesh	4	228
2	West do.	4	356
3	Násik	...	22
4	Ahmednagar	...	37
5	Poona	1	508
6	Sátára	...	160
7	Sholápur	...	127
	Total ...	11	158

24. Of the amount of Rs. 8,359 charged in the Forest accounts against "cost of settlements, compensation for lands and rights," Rs. 843 were spent in the payment of compensation; and the remaining sum Rs. 7,516 exhibits the cost of establishments of Forest Settlement Officers, and is distributed thus :—

No.	Division.	Settlements.				Cost.			
		Completed.		Progressing.		Salaries.	Travelling Allowances.	Contingencies.	Total.
		Sq. m.	Acres.	Sq. m.	Acres.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1	East Khándesh .	...	18	4	228	} 2,851	690	312	3,853
2	West do. ...	...	...	4	356				
3	Násik	...	...	...	22	...	...	...	...
4	Ahmednagar ...	...	72	...	37	266	40	25	331
5	Poona	...	33	1	508	1,220	323	297	1,840
6	Sátára	9	414	...	160	1,092	110	290	1,492
7	Sholápur ...	...	97	...	127	...	...	...	...
	Total ...	9	634	11	158	5,429	1,163	924	7,516

25. The Forest Settlement Officers were also engaged upon compiling forest registers giving the descriptions of boundaries of reserved and protected forests according to the Revision Survey, in English in Form No. 1 of the Forest Department Code, and in the Vernacular in Village Form No. I-A.

(iii)—DEMARCATION.

26. The scarcity of, and high prices that ruled the supply of, food-grains in the Deccan, and the consequent great distress that prevailed among the lower classes, and particularly in the poorer villages neighbouring the Syhádris, suggested the desirability of pushing on vigorously the work of demarcating the boundaries of the forests with special forest boundary-marks to be the outward visible sign of forest reservation, as a quasi-relief measure; and on the proposals being approved, and funds sanctioned, by Government, work was started early in March 1897, and was carried on up to the 15th of June 1897. The quantity of work performed in demarcation during the year as compared with that of the year preceding can be seen in the following table :—

No.	Division.	1895-96.					1896-97.				
		Length of Boundaries in miles.	Number of special Boundary-marks.			Total Cost.	Length of Boundaries in miles.	Number of special Boundary-marks.			Total Cost.
			Large.	Small.	Total.			Large.	Small.	Total.	
						Rs.					Rs.
1	East Khándesh .	3	22	30	52	41	186	126	360	486	157
2	West do. ...	84	473	598	1,071	751	...	...	436	436	114
3	Násik	242	1,467	4,958	6,425	2,701	220	1,275	3,037	4,312	2,139
4	Ahmednagar ...	215	3,570	7	3,577	1,779	288	4,529	...	4,529	1,981
5	Poona	28	669	69	738	599	408	3,272	10,126	13,398	4,097
6	Sátára	27	...	465	465	179	1,623	809	41,556	42,365	8,327
7	Sholápur ...	70	4	761	765	370	21	33	322	355	102
	Total ...	669	6,205	6,888	13,093	6,420	2,746	10,044	55,837	65,881	16,917

(iv)—FOREST SURVEYS.

27. The operations of the Forest Survey Branch Party No. 17 of the Government of India were confined to the Ahmednagar and Poona Divisions; and the following table exhibits the amount of work effected during the forest year :—